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THE INDUSTRY'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE — EST. 1955

MARCH 2016

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Item #	Caliber	Capacity	BBL
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Are You Sharing Your Success?

By Jade Moldé

Each year brings new opportunities for a brand to celebrate its achievements. Notable anniversaries are an easy one — especially those that end in a “0” or “5”. Whether your business was founded in 1966 or 2011, celebrating an anniversary (and letting your customers know about it) sends the message that your organization has the staying power and experience in delivering results to your customer base.

There are a number of industry manufacturers celebrating significant anniversaries this year, including the Remington Outdoor Company's 200th and the Winchester brand's 150th. Each company has marked its anniversary with a special logo; Remington and Winchester Repeating Arms introduced limited edition anniversary firearms, while Winchester Ammunition is celebrating 150 years with commemorative packaging. In addition, Winchester Safes also introduced a special limited

edition anniversary safe. These companies have given consumers an opportunity to revel in the milestones as well, providing interactive looks at the rich history of each brand and introducing social media campaigns.

So, if your store is celebrating a significant anniversary, what's keeping you from sharing your success story with your customers? I realize some stores have larger marketing budgets than others, but there are some basic ways you can promote and celebrate landmarks — and it's not limited to just anniversaries. If your store was founded in 1996, you could simply add “Celebrating 20 Years” to your store's logo on your website and social media accounts, or even incorporate the anniversary year in your logo (for an example, take a look at the anniversary logos for Warne Scope Mounts and Mossy Oak on pages 13 and 17). You could even partner with a local sign shop to print an anniversary banner and post it prominently in your store.

Besides a logo, you could host a special “Anniversary Sale” and promote it to your customers in-store and online. You could also get your employees involved in your celebration by ordering a cake to celebrate your store's “birthday.”

Other than anniversaries, other landmarks worthy of celebration include touting your store's recent donation to a local organization or receiving a special recognition — there are a multitude of opportunities available to you.

For insight on how companies like Remington and Winchester are celebrating their milestones (and telling their story) visit www.remington.com/bicentennial, www.winchester.com, www.winchesterguns.com and www.winchestersafes.com. 



Remington and Winchester are celebrating notable anniversaries this year, and have created integrative campaigns to promote their achievements with consumers. If your store is celebrating an anniversary, what's keeping you from letting your customers know about it?

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Part Of The Family

Editor's Note: We ran a letter from Ryan Mcholan, a new dealer, in the November 2015 issue on how to get better prices from wholesalers. Several readers weighed in, and we sent all of your responses to him. The following is a note from Ryan with an update and a "thank you" to those that contacted him. Ryan, welcome to the family!

After you published my letter in *SI*, I actually had a nice response from several local dealers, and a couple of wholesalers who I'm looking forward to working with in the near future. A special "thank you" to yourself, and the whole *Shooting Industry* team, for going out of your way to assist me and get the help I needed. I truly felt like I was part of the family. A *Shooting Industry* subscriber for life!

Ryan Mcholan, Principal
Southern Patriot Firearms LLC
Cochran, Ga.

Winning Business

We're a new store and I'm enjoying your articles. However, it made my skin crawl in the story "Diversity In The Industry" (January 2016) when you stated, "further showing the importance of gun stores, 39 percent of respondents said they would look to a gun store or shooting range to get information on firearms." The problem with this is it should be the reverse: Customers should go to the free internet for "information" and then come to the store to buy.

In my short experience as a dealer, I see the opposite happen everyday. I've spent hours "educating" a customer just to have him or her later go online to buy and save at least the sales tax — something we just can't compete on. It's the very reason I can't commit to bring myself to stock optics, especially high-end ones. I thought about being a Steiner dealer; but even with MAP, without a restricted item (like guns needing the FFL), someone will just come in my shop, stick their eye behind the glass and then buy it at OpticsPlanet for the same price — minus the 7.25 percent sales tax, or \$150. I don't blame them, but I'm not going to be the sucker, either, who stocks \$5,000–\$10,000 worth of high-end optics to be the free demo store.

In any event, maybe you could make some articles on how we can win business, instead of being a source of free information. Some people respect that information and like to keep business local, but I know of several people who

have picked my brain to death and then asked me to match Bud's Gun Shop prices. If we would get rid of the unfair sales tax discrepancy, then maybe "gun stores" would have more of a chance. Or if more companies would implement GLOCK's MAP policy (which clearly doesn't hurt them), then we'd also have more of a level playing field.

Adam Wagner, Owner
A&P Armory
Magnolia, Texas

*Adam, thank you for your email. You're spot-on — we need to work on changing the "source of information" tag to "winning business" with customers. This is why we include the voice of dealers in *SI*, so those that have experience or have maintained a strong segment of their business can share their insight with others. I think it's a combination of factors that will encourage long-term, repeat customers, such as a welcoming environment, good customer service and a wide variety of inventory to cater to their needs. Readers, I welcome any of your comments.*

A New Distribution Model

I just read your article ("Dealers Forecast 2016," December 2015) and would like to add some thoughts from someone who has built a brand online. The picture you painted of brick-and-mortar stores having issues with manufacturers that sell to massive online dealers at distributor cost is not going away anytime soon. The article seemed to take the stores' side of the issue, but the reality is I understand why manufacturers are headed in this direction and their future business model isn't taking the small dealer into account.

The dealer program ArmaLaser has created allows the best of both worlds: We protect our dealers against undercutting, while at the same time use big-box stores like OpticsPlanet and Amazon to drive volume. I'd be happy to speak with anyone about this new modern distribution method, which I believe the industry will be seeing more and more of and many seem to be unaware of it. ①

Rick Hovsepian, Founder
ArmaLaser Inc.
rickh@armalaser.com

I'd like to kick this to our readers: If anyone wants to weigh in on this topic, contact Rick, or send me an email at editor@shootingindustry.com.



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The State Of The Industry Is "Alert"

By Jade Moldé

The 2016 SHOT Show, by many accounts, was an overwhelming success; it attracted more than 64,000 attendees, had 100 first-time exhibitors as part of SHOT Show NEXT and a vibrant "buzz" surrounding the industry's mega trade show was evident to attendees. The show's momentum was also clear at the State of the Industry Dinner, which featured impassioned messages from NSSF Board of Governors Chairman Bob Scott and NSSF President and CEO Steve Sanetti.

Held on the first night of the show, the State of the Industry Dinner provides attendees with an update on what the industry has accomplished in the past year, as well as providing insight on how the industry's trade association is preparing to face the challenges ahead. Being an election year — in what will likely directly impact the direction of the industry for decades — this State of the Industry Dinner focused on political developments.

"We have to face the fact our industry is being blamed, and attacked, and pilloried unfairly by politicians, media and agenda-driven social engineers seeking a convenient scapegoat for the result of policies which, ironically, they themselves have championed," Sanetti said during his annual address. "The state of our industry is, and must be throughout the year — alert."

By being alert, the industry has been forced to respond to widespread anti-gun/anti-industry propaganda in the political arena and news cycles.

"For the first time, we have seen candidates for the highest office in our nation overtly attack our industry ... Those who



Steve Sanetti, NSSF president and CEO, urges over 2,400 attendees to remain "alert" for the numerous political threats facing the industry during his annual speech at the SHOT Show State of the Industry Dinner.

exploit tragedies and attack us, either for their own political ends or for an understandable desire to make sense out of senseless acts, make no pretense about their goals. So this, in turn, forces us to respond — to reply to deliberate and ignorant falsehoods with the truth, and to educate the public using all means at our disposal," he said.

In response to the misnomer that the industry "does nothing for gun safety" Sanetti highlighted Project ChildSafe — which has distributed more than 100 million free gun locks and safety materials in all 50 states during the last 15 years and has had over 1,200 industry partners sign on in support of the "Own It? Respect It. Secure It." initiative.

Referencing growing levels of public acceptance of firearms, Sanetti identified the greatest challenge facing the industry today.

Continued on pg. 12

Crow Shooting Supply Opens New Warehouses

Crow Shooting Supply has increased its service and distribution capabilities by opening warehouses in Reno, Nev., and Winston-Salem, N.C.

Along with its Montezuma, Iowa, facility, Crow Shooting Supply now boasts more than 250,000 total square feet of warehouse space across the U.S. Each location features a dedicated sales team and region-specific inventory.

"We've added several dealers and resellers outside the Midwest," said Steve Crow, founder of Crow Shooting Supply. "These new locations will speed up delivery times to customers on the coasts and all points in between. We're always accepting new customers, so we encourage gun ranges, gun shops or anyone reselling firearms or gun-related products to get in touch with us."

Visit www.crowshootingssupply.com or call (800) 264-2493



Founders Steve and Brenda Crow (center and second from right) stand in front of the company's Montezuma, Iowa, headquarters with (from left) Duncan Hackworth, international sales manager, Jeannie Bolda, regional sales manager and Bryan Stuntebeck, national sales manager.



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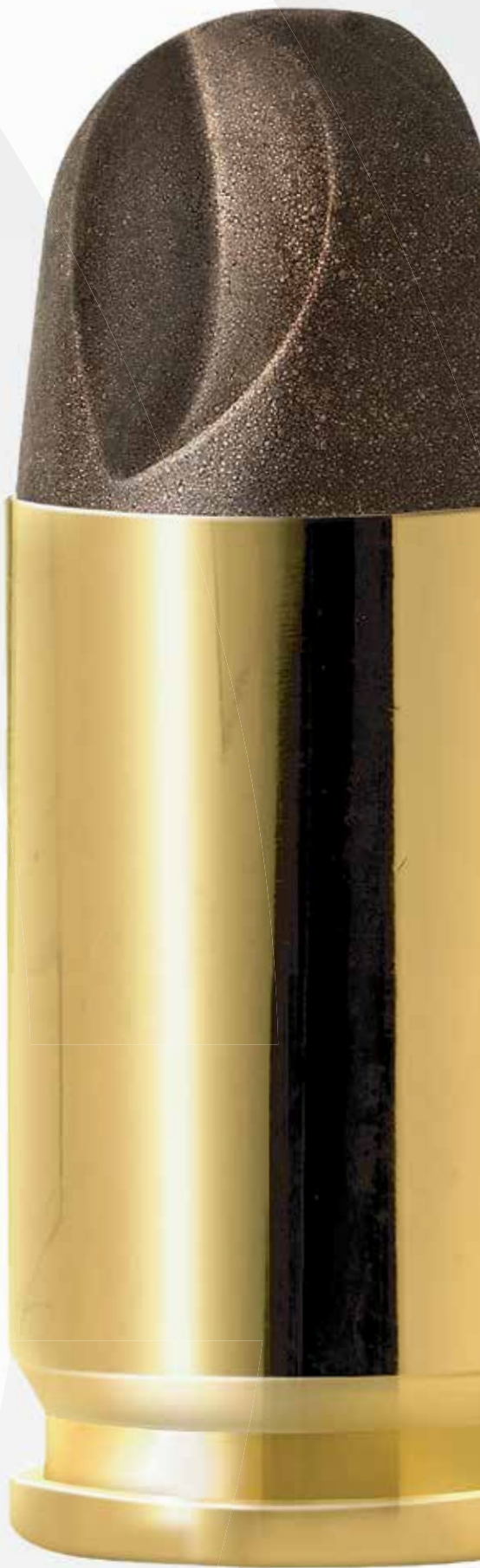
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Crimson Trace Receives Defense Recognition

The Pacific Northwest Defense Coalition (PNDC) recently recognized Crimson Trace with a 10-year Membership Award during the coalition's annual awards banquet.

"Crimson Trace is honored to receive this recognition for its support of the Pacific Northwest Defense Coalition. Our employees are proud to help and support the many men and women who work in the defense industry to protect America," said Lew Danielson, Crimson Trace founder and chairman of the board.

During the past decade, Crimson Trace has supported the PNDC by hosting on-site tours at the company's manufacturing facility in Wilsonville, Ore., sponsoring several annual range day activities, and participating in other defense industry related events.

The PNDC also celebrates its 10th anniversary. The organization has more than 150 member organizations and represents companies across Oregon and Washington. The PNDC focuses on strengthening members' business growth, the region's economy and America's security through training, one-on-one counseling, business-to-business networking and advocacy.

In addition to Crimson Trace's Department of Defense-supplied laser sighting systems, local PNDC member companies also manufacture knives, optics, scope mounts, thermal imaging systems, gun parts, footwear, tracking devices and other products



Lew Danielson (left), Crimson Trace founder and chairman, is joined by Nate Hoke, Crimson Trace customer service director, in accepting the 10-year Membership Award from the PNDC.

to be used around the globe in defense and security services. Other industry companies that are members of the PNDC include Benchmade, Blade-Tech, CRKT, FLIR Systems and Leupold & Stevens.

Visit www.crimsontrace.com

The State Of The Industry Is "Alert"

Continued from pg. 10

"Gun control advocates know they must reverse the trend of increasing acceptance of lawful firearms ownership by the American people, or lose the culture war they have declared. We have no choice but to respond, to fight, and to win. And there ... is where the greatest challenge lies."

Sanetti placed the responsibility on manufacturers, distributors, sales groups, retailers and publishers to educate "those in the middle" on where the industry stands on key issues on the federal, state and municipal level.

"It's up to each and every one of us, to help educate all who will listen — and vote. Persuasive, fact-based, confident, one-on-one communications with customers, suppliers, friends and family, are the best ways to cut through the cloud of emotions surrounding our issues. If something being proposed or discussed won't work, say so, say why, and say it often," Sanetti said.

For information on addressing anti-gun attacks, visit www.nssf.com/govrel.

"One Industry, One Voice"

In conjunction with the State of the Industry Dinner, NSSF released a four-minute video that was shown to attendees. Titled "NSSF: Promoting, Protecting and Preserving Hunting and the Shooting Sports," the video highlights the political firefights of 2016 and the importance of the industry presenting a unified front in this year's critical elections.

The video includes clips of President Obama and Democratic presidential candidates Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and Martin O'Malley making anti-gun/anti-industry statements, as well as interviews and news reports. To contrast, the video presents encouraging statistics and explains the industry's support of effective gun safety measures through programs like Project ChildSafe, and campaigns such as FixNICS and Don't Lie for the Other Guy.

You can view and share this video on your website or Facebook page by visiting NSSF's YouTube channel at this link: <https://youtu.be/X1r0qnhTMTs>.

Editor's Note: A full review of the 2016 SHOT Show will appear in next month's issue, which will also include features on dealers making their "best in show" selections and some key products you may have missed at the show.

DMT Celebrates 40 Years Of Business



Founded in 1976, DMT (Diamond Machining Technology) celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.

"We have thrived and grown worldwide by sticking to tried and true principles — superior product made in the USA, backed by friendly customer service and delivered by people who care about their customers," said Mark Brandon, president of DMT.

All of DMT's sharpeners are made in the U.S. The company holds more than 10 patents and has introduced more than 125 new products, including 10 in the past five years alone.

Today, DMT products are sold in dozens of countries from Canada to Australia. In recognition of its contributions to the expansion of U.S. exports, DMT received a 2014 President's "E" Award for Exports and an Associated Industries of Massachusetts International Business Council (AIM-IBC) 2012 Global Trade Award.

Visit www.dmtsharp.com

Scopecoat Acquires Slideboot

Scopecoat LLC, maker of patented optics protection for transportation and storage, announces its acquisition of Slideboot, a handgun slide-cover company previously owned by Gunhugger Enterprises LLC of Phoenix.

Slideboot was developed to eliminate the need for gun rugs or traditional plastic boxes when transporting handguns to the range, in the vehicle or while in safe storage. The soft neoprene cover protects the slide and sights from dings, nicks and scratches. The form-fitting Slideboot (in seven custom sizes) saves space in a range bag or safe, and the neoprene is not affected by gun oils.

"The Slideboot line fits extremely well into the Scopecoat family of products," said Terry Naughton, president of Scopecoat. "Both product lines are American-made in our factory in Arizona. The addition of Slideboot supports our growing dealer network, and the initial reaction at retail has exceeded our expectations. Once it is seen in action, the Slideboot becomes an easy accessory sale."

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Warne Scope Marks 25th Anniversary

Warne Scope Mounts is celebrating its 25th year of business in 2016. Founded in 1991, the company now has over 75 employees and has products sold in 33 countries.

"Warne Scope Mounts wishes to express our sincere appreciation to our employees and customers for their loyal support as we celebrate our anniversary. We could not have come this far without the loyal support of our customers and hard work of each member of the Warne team," said Dan Goetz, Warne CEO.



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Bond Arms Acquires Boberg

Bond Arms Inc. of Granbury, Texas, has purchased the assets and product lines of Boberg Arms Corp., located in St. Paul, Minn. Boberg Arms has relocated its manufacturing to Bond Arms' Texas facilities.

Boberg Arms is a developer of compact, concealable semi-auto handguns, including the Bullpup, which features a patented rear-feed system. Bond Arms also specializes in small personal-protection handguns.

During the first quarter of 2016, Bond Arms is refining and building the next generation of Bullpup pistols under its brand on a limited basis at its Texas facility. The company is announcing pre-orders for its next-generation Bullpup semi-auto pistols via its website and social media outlets.

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Hornady Supports Local Cancer Foundation

Hornady Manufacturing has doubled its annual donation to the GRACE Foundation for 2015. The GRACE Foundation is a local Grand Island, Neb., nonprofit organization dedicated to serving cancer patients, cancer survivors and their families.

Hornady's donation was made possible by proceeds from sales of Hornady Critical Defense Lite ammunition from November 2014 through November 2015. Critical Defense Lite features a pink bullet tip and pink ribbon packaging to help showcase support in the fight against cancer.

"Everyone knows someone who has been affected by cancer. It is our honor to be a part of a company that can be so giving to our community and give to GRACE, knowing that they will help so many people in need," said Renae Waltemath, Hornady's director of sales.

"This gift makes it possible for us to directly affect families in our community and the surrounding area. We are blessed beyond words for this incredible donation, and thank Hornady for being an outstanding community advocate," said Laurie Kulus, executive director of GRACE Foundation.

The GRACE Foundation provided over \$52,000 in assistance to cancer patients and their families in 2015. The foundation assists those living within 40 miles of Grand Island or being treated at the Grand Island Cancer Treatment Center. The aid helps with financial expenses not typically covered by insurance, such as gas cards, assistance in paying household expenses, food certificates and more.

Visit www.hornady.com



Hawaii Public Safety Selects SIG SAUER

SIG SAUER announces the Hawaii Department of Public Safety (HDPS) has selected the P320 Full Size and Carry as the agency's next service pistol, along with SIG SAUER V-Crown Duty and FMJ ammunition.

The HDPS conducted extensive independent testing of several 9mm handguns from a number of manufacturers in addition to SIG. Department officials said the choice of the 9mm P320 Full Size and Carry was based on several factors: "reliability, accuracy, ease of operation, safety, care and maintenance, and cost."

The contracts called for at least 725 pistols and more than 1 million rounds

of ammunition to be delivered within 60 days. Sig Sauer delivered all 725 P320s and more than 1.2 million rounds of ammunition ahead of schedule. Additionally, the company coordinated the transition training and armorer certification of 25 HDPS personnel within a week of delivery.

The HDPS is comprised of Law Enforcement and Corrections Divisions that are responsible for traffic regulation, corrections and law enforcement services across the state. Headquartered in Honolulu, the department currently has approximately 1,450 law enforcement and corrections officers.



Visit www.sigsauer.com

MidwayUSA Receives National Quality Award

The U.S. Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology has named MidwayUSA as one of four recipients of the 2015 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Midway received the award in the small business category for the second time since 2009.

The Baldrige Award is presented annually by the President of the United States to manufacturing, service, small business, health care, education and nonprofit organizations that apply and are judged to be outstanding in the seven Baldrige criteria for performance excellence.

"This year's Baldrige Award honorees have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to improving

their performance in all facets of their organizations, and they have served as role models for others to follow," said U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker. "As America's Innovation Agency, the Commerce Department is honored to support innovators and job creators who power our economy and help keep America open for business."

"At MidwayUSA, we relentlessly pursue continuous improvement and performance excellence. We are honored and thrilled to accept this award from the National Institute of Standards and Technology. It fuels our passion to be the best-run, most-respected business in America for the benefit of our customers," said Matt Fleming, president of MidwayUSA.



Visit www.midwayusa.com

GLOCK Sport Shooting Foundation Celebrates 25th Anniversary

The GLOCK Sport Shooting Foundation (GSSF) celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. GSSF was formed in 1991 to help introduce people to the shooting sports. Since 1991, GSSF has seen more than 120,000 members, over 200,000 match entries and more than 700 outdoor events.

The GSSF will celebrate its anniversary year with 55 outdoor matches throughout the United States. Another 500-plus Indoor League matches will be available for members who wish to demonstrate their marksmanship, win prizes and enjoy a family-

oriented atmosphere that is safe and fun.

All GSSF matches are low-pressure competitions using standard GLOCK pistols, with no need for expensive match gear. There are 10 competitive divisions and also special awards for juniors, seniors, "super seniors," ladies and three-person teams.

"Millions of dollars in prizes and GLOCK pistols have been awarded over the years. We hope you will come out this year and shoot with GSSF as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of Mr. Gaston Glock's vision," said Alan Ramsey, director of training and GSSF.

Visit www.gssfonline.com



STI Partners With Westwind Investors

STI International announced Westwind Investors has entered into an agreement to invest in the company. After meeting in December, Westwind formalized their intent in early January and anticipates closing on the transaction by April 1, 2016.

"We have been interested in the shooting sports industry for quite some time, but had not found the right combination of quality products and strong management," said Nathan Horvath, Westwind managing director. "STI is a premium product and has the opportunity to bring their success with competitive shooters to the broader handgun market."

"Westwind is the kind of partner you look for to achieve long-term goals," said Greg Mooney, STI CEO. "We have aggressive plans for growth and Westwind can not only support those goals financially, but also through their management strategy and brand development capabilities."

Based in Georgetown, Texas, STI manufactures 1911- and 2011-style firearms for competition, duty and self-defense use.

Visit www.stiguns.com



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Arrest Made In Revision-Aided Sting

Revision Military, a manufacturer of protective eyewear solutions, aided a sting operation to arrest owners and representatives of a Chinese company illegally manufacturing and selling counterfeit eyewear. Guangzhou Botai Optical Visor Co. Ltd., based in Guangzhou, China, had been producing unauthorized counterfeit versions of Revision Military's Desert Locust goggle — Revision's flagship goggle line that debuted in 2006.

"We were alarmed to learn of these counterfeit products," said Jonathan Blanshay, Revision CEO. "Our customers expect only

the best quality and performance from our products. We have built our name and reputation on exceeding standards and will not tolerate inferior, non-authorized knockoff products in the marketplace."

On January 28, Guangzhou Botai U.S. Representative and Co-owner Gong Peiwen (also known as Daniel Gong) was arrested at the SnowSports Industries America (SIA) Snow Show in Denver. Arrest warrants have also been issued for three other employees of the company and all four have been charged with six felonies. Revision worked in conjunction with the Dearborn and Ohio County Prosecutor's Office in Indiana to execute this action.

"Fraudulent products undermine our core mission to protect the troops who protect all of us. We are taking this matter very seriously and will do everything in our power to ensure any individuals or corporate entities involved in an illicit enterprise that threatens Revision's customers and the Revision reputation are prosecuted to the full extent of the law," Blanshay said.

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Tactical West Owner Receives Recognition

Kevin McNair, owner of Las Vegas-based Tactical West LLC, was recently recognized by NSSF's Project ChildSafe Program for being a champion of firearms safety. Additionally, Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval presented McNair with a Certificate of Recognition commending his commitment to promoting firearm and gun safety in the State of Nevada.

Tactical West offers multi-state concealed carry (CCW) firearms training, adult/youth firearms training, NRA training courses, Project ChildSafe seminars and Nevada Department of Wildlife Hunter Education classes.

Project ChildSafe's message of "Own it? Respect it. Secure it." is an industry-wide initiative to increase public awareness of the importance of firearm safety and responsibility, and encourage firearms owners to properly store their firearms.



Visit www.tacticalwest.com

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Mossy Oak Celebrates 30 Years

Established in 1986, Mossy Oak celebrates 30 years of business in 2016. With over 1,000 licenses and partners, the company not only provides hunters and outdoorsmen and women with effective concealment, but also with a symbol of their passion for the outdoors.



"Camouflage has come a long way in 30 years and is being used for more than just hunting these days. We're honored to be a part of that trend, and we know that without great partners that have come alongside us throughout the years, we wouldn't be celebrating this milestone," said Bill Sugg, Mossy Oak president. "It is with much gratitude that we celebrate 30 years."

"The thing that I'm proudest of is not the growth of the business, but the relationships, the family, within the brand today. People really are what are most important," said Toxey Haas, the company's founder and CEO. "I'm overwhelmed with thanks for all the great relationships formed through the brand. We've been blessed with many loyal partners who have helped put millions of products in front of the consumer."

In its 30 years, Mossy Oak has also established other subsidiaries to meet needs for outdoor enthusiasts, such as Mossy Oak Properties, BioLogic, Nativ Nurseries, GameKeepers, Mossy Oak Productions, MOOSE Media, Nativ Living and GameKeepers Kennels.

Visit www.mossyok.com

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Henry Supports Kids & Clays

Henry Repeating Arms is partnering with the Kids & Clays Foundation's national series of sporting clays events to benefit Ronald McDonald House Charities. Ronald McDonald House gives critically ill children and their families assistance across the U.S.

Henry's donation of 100 limited-edition Golden Boy Silver rifles with a special Kids & Clays logo and custom serial numbers will be featured at all 2016 Kids & Clays/Ronald McDonald House sporting clays events.

"We are honored to be working with Kids & Clays and their ultimate mission of helping children and their families when they

need it most," said Anthony Imperato, Henry Repeating Arms president. "Our company's mission is to help Americans through not only our fine, domestically made products, but also through donating our time, efforts and funds to worthy causes. Kids & Clays is certainly one such cause."



Visit www.henryrifles.com or www.kidsandclays.com for an event schedule.

Editor's Note: Because SHOT Show is normally held in the first few weeks of the year, exhibitors are able to recognize their top distributors, sales reps and dealers, and also present other special awards. Below are a collection of these recognitions for top performance in 2015.

SPORTSMEN'S ALLIANCE PRESENTS SPECIAL AWARD

The Sportsmen's Alliance presented MKS Supply Owner Charles Brown with the Vincent W. Shiel Sportsmen's Heritage Award at the 2016 SHOT Show. Brown has been a long-time advocate for the protection and defense of sportsmen's rights.

"I'm humbled and honored to receive the Vincent W. Shiel Sportsmen's Award. The work the Sportsmen's Alliance does to protect the rights and increase both participation and access for hunters, fishermen and trappers is essential to the survival of the industry and our hunting and outdoor heritage," Brown said.

"Mr. Brown is a shining example of the good that can be gained when industry leaders take an active role in protecting the rights and interests of American sportsmen," said Evan Heusinkveld, Sportsmen's Alliance interim president and CEO.



Charlie Brown (center) accepts the Vincent W. Shiel Sportsmen's Heritage Award from Evan Huesinkveld (left) and Tommy Millner, Cabela's CEO.

KEN JEFFERIES & ASSOCIATES HONORED

Ken Jefferies & Associates (KJ&A) announces it received the Slide Fire Sales Representative Group of the Year Award.

"All of us at KJ&A are very proud to receive this honor from Slide Fire," said Ken Jefferies, KJ&A president. "This award is a result of our team effort to provide Slide Fire with an inventive and aggressive program to increase their distribution and sales channels."

"KJ&A played a pivotal role in our achievements in 2015," said Jeremiah



KJ&A's Johnny Grace (second from right) stands with Slide Fire's (from left) Chris Nichols, Jeremiah Cottle and Brandon Renner after being honored as the company's Sales Representative of the Year.

Cottle, Slide Fire president. "We're extremely happy to partner with such a dedicated and resourceful group of individuals. I'm looking forward to another successful year with KJ&A as a key part of our sales team."

KJ&A also announces manufacturers recognized two of its employees for their performance in 2015.

Johnny Grace, director of sales northeast, was awarded Slide Fire's Sales Representative of the Year. "I'm much honored to receive this recognition from Slide Fire. KJ&A provides its sales teams with the incentive and energy to take on our customers' biggest challenges and gives us the opportunity and support to think out of the box," Grace said.

Meopta selected Joe Crosby, sales director for southeast sales, as its Salesman of the Year. "To receive this award from Meopta is a very deep and personal honor on behalf of KJ&A, the team at Meopta and myself. We consider ourselves part of the team of any company we represent and our sales channels recognize our knowledge of the company, products and passion we have for our clients and our sports," Crosby said.

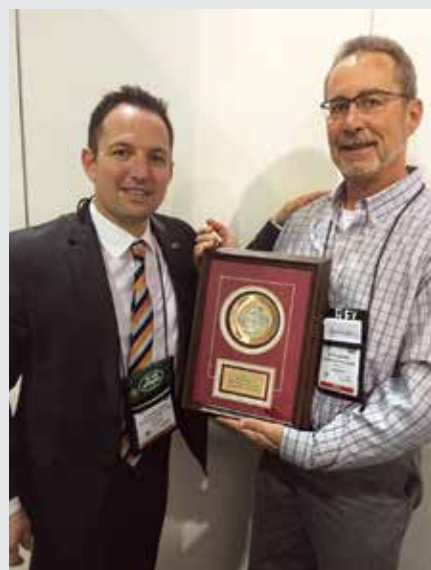


Joe Crosby (center), of KJ&A, was selected as Meopta's Salesman of the Year. Crosby accepts the award from Meopta's (from left) Barbara Bedel, Yolanta Wadolowski, Reinhard Seipp and Matthew Parente.

BUSHMASTER ANNOUNCES LEADING DISTRIBUTOR

Bushmaster Firearms International selected Zanders Sporting Goods as its 2015 Distributor of the Year. David Hollinger, director of distribution for Remington Outdoor Company, presented the award to Steve Denning, Zanders buyer.

"It's a great honor to receive this award, which is a testament to all of our hardworking employees," said Stefanie Zanders, general manager. "Without them, we wouldn't be able to provide such a high level of customer service to our clients."



Zanders was recognized as Bushmaster Firearms International's 2015 Distributor of the Year. David Hollinger (left) presents the award to Steve Denning during a ceremony at the Remington booth.

OTIS TECHNOLOGY PRESENTS SALES AWARDS

Otis Technology recognized Jeff Robles & Associates as its 2015 Sales Agency of the Year. Jeff Robles & Associates has been representing the Otis line since 2004 and has 11 sales representatives that cover the Western U.S.

"Jeff Robles & Associates is our longest-standing representative agency — and for good reason. They are a natural extension of our brand and work side-by-side with our internal team and sales managers to further Otis as the leader in premier firearm maintenance products," said Frank Devlin, Otis national sales manager.

Brian Nguyen, of Jeff Robles & Associates, was recognized as Otis' 2015 Sales Representative of the Year.

CRIMSON TRACE RECOGNIZES INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Crimson Trace presented several awards at the 2016 SHOT Show to honor its industry partners for their accomplishments in 2015:

Sporting Goods Retailer of the Year :
Cabela's
Retailer of the Year — OpticsPlanet
OEM Partner of the Year — Smith & Wesson
Distributor of the Year — Green Supply



Crimson Trace Director of Commercial Sales Donald Wright (second from left) presents a plaque to Matt Highby, Cabela's optics category manager. Also pictured are (from left) Jeremy Boon (Cabela's), Landon Steimle (Crimson Trace) and Jamee Guggenmos (Cabela's).

"Our many partnerships with other leading companies within the shooting sports industry play a key role in helping us better serve our customers," said Donald Wright, Crimson Trace sales director. "We wanted to publicly thank these companies for their great service to America's firearms owners."

VIRIDIAN NAMES REP OF THE YEAR

Viridian Green Laser Sights named Rodney Smith of ProActive Sales & Marketing as the company's "Viridian Rep of the Year." Smith earned this recognition for his dedication in growing sales in his territory and promoting the Viridian brand to customers.

TRISTAR ARMS HONORS DISTRIBUTOR OF THE YEAR

TriStar Arms announced United Sporting Companies (USC) has been awarded Distributor of the Year for 2015.

"United Sporting Companies played an important role in our growth this year," said Ryan Bader, TriStar sales and marketing manager. "And their exceptional work



Troy Grant, USC buyer, (left) accepts the Distributor of the Year Award from TriStar's Ryan Bader.

ethic, professionalism and above gross sales were an integral part of getting our products into the hands of customers."

Troy Grant, USC buyer, accepted the award. "I'm honored to be recognized by everyone at TriStar. The company's products and customer service stand on their own, and I'm excited to watch them continue to grow as we continue to work with their team," he said. ①

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CARL ZEISS SPORT OPTICS Announces Promotion

Joel Harris is the new head of global public relations at Carl ZEISS' Sports Optics Division. He will handle all public communications for the division worldwide. Harris has 20 years of outdoor industry brand management and public relations experience. Prior to joining ZEISS, he worked for G5 Outdoors, Eastman Outdoors and Kahles Optics.

J. Harris



AIMPOINT Adds To Marketing Team

Dory Schoby and Brittney Stalvey have joined the Aimpoint marketing team. Both have been appointed marketing managers; Schoby for hunting and Stalvey for professional products. Schoby had been a marketing coordinator for Aimpoint the past three years. An avid hunter, she previously worked for Cabela's and South Dakota Wild. Stalvey

D. Schoby



B. Stalvey

has a strong background in competitive shooting, law enforcement, as well as military products and training. She had worked for Telluric Group and Blue Force Gear.



VISTA OUTDOOR Names President Of Outdoor Division

Vista Outdoor Inc. has named Kelly T. Grindle president of its outdoor products division. In his new role, Grindle will

K. Grindle

be part of the senior management team and report directly to Mark DeYoung, the company's chairman and CEO. David White will continue as president of shooting sports. Grindle had worked for Johnson Outdoors Inc. for 16 years, most recently as senior VP for marine electronics, watercraft and diving. He has a bachelor's degree in finance from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University and an MBA from Marquette University.

CHEVALIER ADVERTISING Appoints PR/Marketing Specialist

Jake Meyer has joined Chevalier Advertising, Marketing & Public Relations as PR and marketing specialist. Meyer brings to the agency experience in bow hunting, competitive archery, firearms, fishing and wildlife management. His education and professional experience covers marketing management, personal and corporate financial planning and event planning.

SCHOLASTIC SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION Announces New SPP Positions

Tammy Mowry and Rick Leach have new positions with the Scholastic Pistol Program (SPP) of the Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation (SSSF). Mowry has been promoted to national director and Leach will be joining the SPP as director of development.

Mowry has served as SPP program manager since it started in 2012 and has been instrumental in its creation and development. Leach had been a volunteer and coach with the SCTP since 2011 before starting the SPP program in 2012. He has been serving as the SPP volunteer state advisor in Wisconsin and has a key role in growing Wisconsin into one of the largest SPP member-states in the country.

OTIS TECHNOLOGY Adds to Sales Team

Otis Technology announced the latest additions to its government/international sales team. Rick Arnold joins the company as government sales manager and Jake Austin has been promoted to government sales specialist.

As government sales manager, Arnold will be responsible for all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, including the National Guard and reserves. He's a 25-year U.S. Air Force veteran with sales management and product development experience in the private sector.

As government sales specialist, Austin will be responsible for inside sales and support for government/international sales. He began his career at Otis in 2014.

ELEY Hires Manager

Mike Corkish is ELEY's new sales manager for North America. He will be in charge of all aspects of the company's ammunition sales in the U.S. and Canada. Corkish brings more than 20

years of progressive experience in sales, management and business development. His most recent position was as national account manager with Kimber Mfg. Inc.

NASGW Elects Director

Gary Zum was elected to the NASGW board of directors for a two-year term. He is a partner and senior VP for industry relations at Big Rock Sports. Zum brings a wealth of experience to the NASGW board having been active in various outdoor sport organizations for many years in different leadership positions. Kent Williams of Williams Shooters Supply, Brad Burney of L.M. Burney Distributors and Larry Massimo of Davidson's Inc., were re-elected to the board.

"We are excited to have Gary join us on the leadership team to help strengthen the association's impact on the industry and share our confidence in two-step distribution. I'm confident Gary is going to make an important and positive impact on our organization," said Kenyon Gleason, NASGW president.

OUTTECH Appoints Manager

Joseph Sahn is Outtech's new regional manager focusing on farm and home accounts. Sahn, an outdoorsman, brings an extensive background in the hunting and outdoor industry to the role. He used to be with the Iowa Army National Guard and holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa.

BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS & ANGLERS Selects New Board Member

Rachel Vandevort has joined the national board of directors of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers. She brings marketing expertise and deep industry relationships to the group. Vandevort is trade relations manager at Kimber Mfg. where she interacts with media and industry members to disseminate the Kimber brand.

XS SIGHT SYSTEMS Names Marketing Manager

XS Sight Systems has named Annie Foster as its new marketing manager. In this position, Foster will be responsible for achieving the company's market penetration and growth objectives. Her marketing and manufacturing background will help create brand awareness and product knowledge to increase sales and market demand.

Foster had been with Bold Ideas Texas, the official Colt license holder of the Colt Competition Rifle. She has also been competing in 3-Gun matches across the U.S. for the past four years.

CAMFOUR

Announces New President, Promotions

Doug Bielefeld is Camfour's new president, which was announced by Malcolm Getz, CEO and shareholder of Camfour Holding Inc. As president, Bielefeld will be responsible for the company's day-to-day operations but will also continue being Camfour's CFO.

Getz announced other promotions as well: Bill Howe to purchasing manager; Sara Forish to marketing manager; Adam Abramowicz to inventory control and compliance specialist; and Brian Drzyzga to customer service and sales coordinator.

According to Getz, all changes are "from within the existing workforce we are so proud of."

RUGER

Adds To Board Of Directors

Ruger has announced the appointment of Sandra S. Froman as a member of the company's board of directors. Froman is a past president of the NRA and currently serves on its board. Aside from managing her private law practice, Froman speaks at colleges, law schools and other venues on Second Amendment issues. She is an active hunter, shooter, and firearms collector as well as an NRA-certified instructor and member of numerous shooting and hunting organizations. Froman graduated with distinction from Stanford University with a B.A. in economics and earned her Juris Doctor degree from Harvard Law School.

SWANSON RUSSELL

Announces Promotions/New Hires

Swanson Russell has announced the promotion of six employees at its Lincoln office: Matt Anderson, from associate designer to designer; Logan Bartels, from associate designer to designer; Sarah Bisbee, from senior account manager to account supervisor; Jeff Deans, from writer/producer to senior writer/producer; Dan Dunbar, from production artist to designer; and Jenni Schroeder, from media coordinator to media buyer.

The communications agency also announced the addition of five new employees at its Lincoln office: Clover Campbell, Courtney Faber, Emma Hulsey, Aaron Jarosh and Amber Mend.

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SPORTSMEN'S ALLIANCE

Hires CFO

The Sportsmen's Alliance has hired Gordon Pry of Galena, Ohio, as CFO. Pry brings an extensive list of accomplishments and education to the role. He is a 24-year army veteran with experience in infantry, logistics and human resources. Pry, who has a B.S. from Ohio State University and an MBA from Franklin University, has also worked for international and regional companies under various HR and financial titles.

HUNTERS SPECIALTIES

Appoints Art Director

Jason McKee has joined Hunters Specialties as senior art director. He will help update and revitalize the look of the company, its products and packaging to push the motto "Serious Hunting Tools." McKee is a graduate of the University of Alabama with a B.F.A. in graphic design. He has over 12 years of experience in branding, design and photography with various industries including the hunting and outdoor industry. ⑤

PERSONAL DEFENSE MARKET

The Value Of Charitable Donations

By Massad Ayoob

A firearms retailer won't be in business for long before solicitations start coming in to donate prizes (firearms, for example) to such worthy firearms-related causes as gun clubs, shooting matches, hunters' groups, local law enforcement associations, etc. As in any business, donations to worthy causes are seen as a cost of doing business, written off to the intangible thing called "goodwill."

John and Terri Strayer are lifelong shooting enthusiasts and champion competition shooters, and seven years ago, they opened the Pro Arms Gun Shop in Live Oak, Fla. They both wanted to "pay back and pay forward" to the shooting sports they enjoyed so much for so long. "We've donated 12 or 15 guns to major shooting matches in North and Central Florida in the last seven years," John said. "We also handle firearms transfers for Friends of NRA and the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF). And we intend to keep doing so."

But does it contribute to his gun shop's bottom line?

"It's hard to put a price tag on it," John begins. "It's generally local people at NRA and NWTF events, not so much from major matches because folks come from all around, not just our market area. It's more goodwill for, and with, the shooting sports. We've received a lot of acknowledgement from people, but you can't say how much it puts in the cash drawer."

While somewhat "intangible," Strayer has noticed increased activity from those who win prizes at an event his store donated products to.

"With Friends of NRA and NWTF, what we've found is lots of potential customers who had never been in the shop — but came there to pick up their prize or gun they won in an auction — become regular customers. It puts you on their map. Many of



Your store's generosity can positively impact your local community. Here, the Taft Union High School Trap Club (Taft, Calif.) competed at the Kern County Cattlemen's Association sporting clay fundraiser using guns, ammo, a safe, eye and ear protection and clays purchased with grants from the NRA Foundation.

them have become repeat customers after dealing with our staff and finding our shop a welcoming place to do business," he noted.

In Micanopy, Fla., the great old Harry Beckwith's Gun Shop is now run by Jack Pickett. His wife Michelle is leader of the local chapter of The Well Armed Woman. In addition to this organization, the shop donates guns for OSA (the Ocala Sportsman's Association), the local turkey-hunting group's Gator Gobbler event and "always" Friends of NRA. Also on their list of donation recipients are introductory shooters' programs, who receive quantities of shotgun shells, etc.

"We donate about \$2,500–\$3,000 worth a year," Pickett said. "Given the margins in the retail firearms business and the size of our market, it's significant. Honestly, I can't answer how much business it brings in. We don't get a lot of 'I'm here because you donate to the NRA,' but I see a lot of people come in who I met at those events — and I suspect this is one reason why. We give OSA members 10 percent off on accessories, and do a fairly good business with them. I'm assuming it does have some benefits, but I can't put a dollar or percentage value on it. How many would shop with me even if I didn't donate? I don't know for sure. To me, I'm not donating to get return from customers — I'm donating to further the sport, and to support a right we and all our customers cherish."

Benefits From The Police Side

Mitch Shore in Lincolnwood, on the outskirts of Chicago, runs Shore Galleries (founded by his dad, Sig Shore, and approaching its 60th year in business). Their business is mainly police equipment, and they're the local supplier to Chicago PD, most of whose officers carry their own guns purchased from an approved list.

"Most of the guns we donate go to law enforcement conferences," Shore said. "Those include ILEETA (the International Law Enforcement Educators and Trainers Association, which holds its annual worldwide training conference in the area every spring), ITOA (the Illinois Tactical Officers Association) and the Chicago Brotherhood of the Fallen."

As times have gotten tough, Shore has noticed a drop-off in manufacturers willing to donate products.

"Up until a few years ago, it was a lot easier to get manufacturers to work with you on donations. Advertising cuts and tighter budgets have made that less easy. Today, a manufacturer who, in the past, would have given away a free product, may now sell

it at cost if it's going to be a goodwill donation — but even this has dried up a little bit. We donate up to five guns a year, more if we can get help from manufacturers. Ruger has always been very generous."

Like the other dealers above, Shore has had similar experiences with prizewinners.

"We've had prizewinners pick up their gun, then buy holsters, ammo, an EOTech to go with their new MSR, or other accessories. Perhaps they even feel a little obligated."

But does "favors for cops" equal big contracts in police equipment? The question made Shore laugh. "There's no favoritism in the bidding process," he answered. "We donate mainly for goodwill." Indeed, the connection may work in another direction. He notes, "When a police association group is looking for stuff, they may say, 'Hey, our department bought from you,' but the bid process is what it is. They might call us if it's something that didn't have to go out to bid, though."

Shore adds, "When we want to donate, we'll first reach out to manufacturers. With some companies, we may go through our local rep, or we might have contacts at the factory."

Both Sides Of The Street

Some firearms dealers have one foot on the civilian side and one foot on the police side, and they get solicited for donations too. The Ray O'Herron Company in Danville, Ill., is primarily a public safety equipment supplier, but also has a retail gun shop serving the law-abiding public.

Manager Mike O'Herron said, "We support the industry, which is obviously very near and dear to us. We sell police/public safety equipment. When we go to conferences and shows we're advertising ourselves, but we're also giving back. We service about six states, and we probably donate close to \$40,000 per year on the public safety side."

"When we go to conferences and shows we're advertising ourselves, but we're also giving back."

—Mike O'Herron, Ray O'Herron Company

O'Herron also donates on the retail side of his store, but it's noticeably less active compared to public safety.

"We donate to a few shooter competitions from the retail gun shop side, a couple thousand dollars a year, simply because not too many of the gun clubs or match sponsors hit us up. They tend to solicit manufacturers directly, at least in our area. It's more about goodwill; we don't try to figure out the return dollar-wise."

Is It Worth It?

Let's look at the "bottom line" of the bottom line, as it were. Note: None of the above-mentioned successful businesses can point to a dollar figure to validate their decision of donating to worthy gun-related causes. Yet, each continues to do so and finds it worth the effort and the money. Each is a very successful business operation, which gives them options smaller shops in less lucrative business climates might not have — but none of them would look down on a smaller business if they couldn't find a way to contribute. At the same time, we can't help but note they feel the donations are good for their business, and certainly, a good thing given back to the customers who made them successful. **■**

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Facebook Frustrations: "Like" It Or Leave It



By Taylor Smithfield

Let's face it. Facebook is practically synonymous with the term "social networking." With 1.1 billion unique monthly visitors (three-and-a-half times more than Twitter gets) the site should be an integral part of your marketing strategy. However, with Facebook's increased efforts to censor certain content, your gun shop's page may be more strictly scrutinized.

Facebook already prohibits paid advertising of firearms, but many dealers are discovering they also can't post links on their Facebook to their e-commerce shops, even if the operation is legal. You may have encountered this policy in action already. If you post a link to an online store where firearms are sold, or if you link to a site that links to an online store where firearms are sold, it violates Facebook's policies.

Hyatt Gun Shop (Charlotte, N.C.) discovered this when Facebook removed, much to their surprise, a post about an online sale on gun vaults and safes. They assumed the advertisement would be kosher since it was promoting gun safety. However, it linked to their e-commerce store. Likewise, Facebook shut down

**These are unfortunate obstacles
dealers don't "sign up for" when
they sign up for Facebook.**

Pittsburgh Tactical Firearms' (McKeesport, Pa.) entire Facebook page because they simply announced an AR-15 raffle. Facebook classified the post as an advertisement to "sell" weapons. The store claims to have lost 40 percent of their business at the time their page was removed.

If you ask Facebook's team about posting content to link to your online gun store, their reply will be: "Ads may not promote firearms, ammunition, paintball guns, BB guns, fireworks, explosives, pepper spray, knives, Tasers or weapons of any kind, including those used for self-defense. Ads may not directly or indirectly link to landing pages where people can purchase any of these products." They seem to use the term "ad" loosely to include advertising within "posts" to your Facebook page as well as actual paid advertisements. It's easy to see how you might accidentally violate their terms of use without even realizing it.

These are unfortunate obstacles dealers don't "sign up for" when they sign up for Facebook. Especially since the networking site isn't restricting other segments of legitimate commerce the way they are the firearms industry. Depending on how Facebook interprets your content (and how thorough their vetting process) it may be very difficult to advertise your store. Even though their logo is giving a "thumbs up," approval is not exactly the message they're sending to gun dealers. So, what's the best way to tackle threats to your social presence?

Stay In The Game

If you want to up your chances of staying in the game, there are a few approaches you can take. You could turn your page into a general discussion about guns or customer service-related topics. Using your page for product reviews is also an option (you can post photos of guns, but they can't point at the viewer). Or perhaps you could post in-store gun sales or promotions without linking to an online store to purchase them. You'd at least have a solid reach in your local community this way. You can approach the policy regarding inadvertent linking to your online store by typing the following in your Facebook description: "Find us on Google: Jim's Gun Shop in Tallahassee."

However, if you find Facebook is too restrictive for you (or if you've been kicked off) you may be in luck. An emerging social networking site geared toward gun enthusiasts is offering an alternative to Facebook. Gun District currently has over 8,000 members, and this number is steadily growing by 15 percent every month, says Laura Evans, Gun District's director of marketing. Free to sign-up and sponsored by Legally Armed America, the site provides several Facebook-esque features like profiles, groups, pages and advertisements.



"Gun District is a place where you can speak freely about your interests without being bullied," Evans explains. Unlike Facebook, it's "an unrestricted, uninhibited and unapologetic exchange of information and opinions regarding guns, the Second Amendment and the shooting sports lifestyle."

Gun dealers can advertise on the social networking site as well. Yes, you can even link to your online store — using social networking as it's intended! Plus, you won't have to wonder if or when you'll be blocked. Your audience is also guaranteed to appreciate your content.

"We've seen an uptick in the number of retailers who have joined Gun District and encourage them to continue to post their content regularly," Evans says. "Additional opportunities for advertising will become available via weekly e-blasts and app sponsorships, and we're constantly looking for new ways to help promote the shooting sports industry."

The project is still in its infancy, but it may be an ideal time to establish your store's presence on the pro-gun site because Facebook will most likely tighten its policies in the future. So whether you've learned to work around the obstacles Facebook presents or you've been blocked already, it's beneficial to find other ways to do business and build your fan base. Gun District has the potential to become a thriving social network and an avenue for you to conduct business.

Please share your own experiences with Facebook (and social networking in general) as a gun enthusiast or dealer and how you've successfully complied with policies while still promoting your brand. Think about joining a site like Gun District (www.gundistrict.com) and check out some other social networking sites like www.gunsocialnetwork.com and www.libertyheads.com.

Fast And Accurate Dispositions With Gun StoreMaster

Blue Book has added a new feature called "fast4473" to their Gun StoreMaster software in order to speed up the disposition process. The update makes it easier to complete ATF form 4473 on desktop and mobile devices and "greatly increases accuracy, reduces errors, and further ensures compliance with ATF mandates by double-checking entries and processes," according to a Blue Book rep.

Compliant with ATF Rule 2008-3, retailers using fast4473 can still print the form for signing and filing; fast4473 is available now for dealers.

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Goat Tuff Gives Preference To Dealers With Equalizer

Good news for dealers: Goat Tuff Products has decided to make the Equalizer Archery Release Aid available through its website and authorized dealers only.

"This year we felt the optimal way to get our Equalizer into the hands of the archer/bowhunter was to go dealer only and offer each authorized dealer a shop model that could be used to show customers the advantages of the Equalizer," says Jerry Smith, Goat Tuff president. For \$100, you'll receive a Pro Shop exhibit model for your store.

Your customers will appreciate the Equalizer because it increases bow performance by 10 to 15 fps for each inch of increase up to 3 inches without increasing draw weight.



"The Equalizer was designed for short draw archers or those that have had to shoot lower draw weights due to age or injury but has become a favorite with all archers looking to increased performance," Smith says. ❶

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Beyond The Purse: Holster Fits For Women

By Lisa Parsons-Wraith

When and where to carry are some of the questions women must ask themselves when they become firearm owners. The next question is *how* to carry a firearm. Many women opt for a purse holster as the easiest way to carry. Others, however, prefer on-the-body carry, and today's female shooter has plenty of options.

Crossfire Elite has a line of holsters designed for women incorporating memory-type foam laminate technology and ballistic nylon fabric. The Pulse is a fully ambidextrous, low-profile holster and it can be worn in up to nine carry positions OWB or IWB. Crossfire's "Spring-loaded Thumb Break" System keeps the firearm secure when carried OWB and the retention system can be removed for compression fit. The Pulse allows women to express their personal style as it comes in four pattern choices (Blush, Fusion, Spark and Tango) and four color choices (Black, Iris, Silverdust and Turquoise).

Crossfire's Rebel holster is also a low-profile holster designed for pocket carry. It's fully ambidextrous with a grippy-rubber exterior fabric and a fleece interior. The closed-bottom design keeps lint and other items out of the barrel. The Rebel comes in the same color choices as the Pulse.

The versatile Luxe holster is super sleek and can be used as a purse, pocket or IWB holster. The Luxe uses Crossfire's "Speed Retainer" system, a closed bottom and a grip-rubber exterior. It comes in four pattern choices, and black.

Designed for purse or OWB carry, the Edge holster sports dual belt clips to keep the firearm stable and secure — while allowing it to be attached to a belt, waistband, purse or pocket. Features include the "Speed Retainer" system and a 3D holster design, which won't collapse when the pistol is removed from the holster. Color and pattern options are the same as the Pulse.

A Sticky Holster is another versatile option for women. Made of sticky material, which adheres to other fabrics with a bit of pressure, the Sticky Holster can be used in many ways including pocket, purse, IWB, in an ankle rig and in Sticky Holster's Guard-



The Original Concealment Leggings (OCL) from UnderTech Undercover offer a sporty and fashionable way to conceal a firearm.

Her Belt. Another bonus of the Sticky Holster is, over time, use and body heat will mold the holster to the gun, giving women a custom fit. The highly adaptable Sticky Holster is also very affordable making it a popular option for many women.

Dene Adams LLC makes a line of feminine and practical corset holsters. They come in a variety of configurations ranging from the Hourglass, which features a tank top-like design to the ultra-small Petite Sun-Kissed corset, which is their smallest model. The Hourglass can accommodate a full-sized firearm, while the Petite is designed for subcompacts. The corset holsters are made of breathable mesh with lace accent and a dry-wicking lining, which draws moisture away from the body and keeps women cool. Dene Adams also sells a custom plastic triggerguard to work with the corset holsters for additional security and ease of draw. Women will appreciate the fact they can cinch the waste a bit while being easily concealed under loose-fitting clothing.

The Lotus Concealed Carry Harness with Holster from Deep Conceal can also be a good option for women. The Lotus is designed for carry underneath a shirt. It has 1-inch webbing, an adjustable front, back and sides, and a 3-inch elastic insert in the back for a comfortable, no-show fit. The holster is sewn on with a moisture-wicking material between the fabric layers.

A pocket on the opposite side of the firearm holds a spare magazine. Designed to fit small- to medium-sized firearms, the Lotus is available in black or white.

The Original Concealment Leggings (OCL) from UnderTech Undercover is growing into one of the most popular concealment options on the market for women. Leggings are such a popular athletic and fashion item (most women own several pairs) and if they're made to conceal a firearm, they'd be a must-have for any female shooter. The OCLs are stylish, comfortable and made of the same material as most popular brands of leggings. They have the capability of holding two



The Pulse (below) and Rebel (left) Holsters from Crossfire were designed by women and can be used for many types of carry.

firearms, as there is a holster in the back for a traditional "kidney" position and a holster in the front for appendix carry. The gun is secured by a patent-pending retention strap, which keeps the handgun firmly in place, yet easy to draw.

The best part about the OCLs is if a woman isn't carrying two firearms, the spare pocket can be used to secure a cellphone. This feature is especially valuable to female athletes and hikers. The OCLs are available in black only, and are suitable for athletic wear or they can be dressed up for a night out. Sizes are XS to XXXL and they come in right- or left-hand draw.

Host A New Kind Of Fashion Show

When it comes to selling some of these holsters, their attributes aren't obvious in the package. A great way to make a fun event out of featuring new products is to host a holster fashion show. You can enlist the help of employees and loyal customers to highlight new holsters and explain how they work in a fun, social atmosphere. You can also invite your customers to model their own favorite holsters. Many women like to see just how well a firearm is concealed in a holster and enjoy the "surprise reveal" you can create at a fashion show-type event.

A great way to make a fun event out of featuring new products is to host a holster fashion show.

Getting like-minded women together in a room will generate conversations about all kinds of firearm-related products, and will give you a chance to really hear what women shooters want. It also allows dealers to order samples of new products and test the waters on how well a new item will sell. You'll get plenty of feedback on the kinds of products women are looking for — and won't waste valuable shelf space on holsters that look like a good idea on paper, but don't fit your clientele's needs. Consider auctioning off some of the holsters to benefit a local charity and the event will surely be well attended. ①

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The FUTURE of RECREATIONAL SHOOTING

MARKETING FUN TO A YOUNGER GENERATION

While personal and home defense are still motivating factors driving firearm sales these days, those who become shooters-for-life know recreational shooting is a contagious pastime. It's fun, and it's highly social. Those factors especially play well to younger customers, who are the future of the industry.

The NSSF's 2014 report "Sport Shooting Participation in the U.S." estimates the number of target/sport shooters in 2014 jumped more than 25 percent from 2012. A number of those were younger shooters, including women. More than a quarter of all those who did not shoot in 2014 expressed a strong interest in still doing so.

Now's the time for the industry to focus on bringing back those new, younger shooters who fell away during the big firearms boom of several years ago. Why did they leave?

"I don't think the industry fully realizes the massive impact the lack of .22 ammo had. Around 2012, manufacturers began making fantastic new .22 handguns, long rifles and carbines. New shooters got interested in the sport, bought their guns and then we started running out of ammo. So we lost them. You just can't start a new shooter off with a 9mm. If the first shot scares them, they're gone. We're still trying to draw the new shooter from two years ago back to the range to fulfill what they never really got to do."

This is the perspective of John Monson, owner of the chain of five stores that makes up Bill's Gun Shop and Range in the tri-state region of Minnesota, Wisconsin and North Dakota. The first store opened in 2003, and the most recent, on the Minnesota-

North Dakota line, just last month. Four of the shops include NSSF Five-Star indoor ranges.

Monson is staking his 15-year firearms business reputation on a new strategy to make recreational shooting irresistible for Millennial-aged shooters.

"We're going to focus on the entertainment of shooting. We're re-branding ourselves, and we're going to advertise this new brand in a way we've never advertised before. We're no longer going to push self-defense. It's going to be 'Moonlight Bowling,' 'Demon Busters' and 'Call of Duty' — which is our competition."

Making The Transition

Monson says his initial focus at Bill's Gun Shop and Range was defensive and tactical training.

"Conceal and carry was huge. Then we went tactical and advanced tactical. We trained with every kind of course you can imagine," Monson said.

After a while, Monson says his business just "burned out" on its tactical focus.

"We scaled it back down to our mainstay classes — the basic, intermediate, concealed carry in a one-on-one training environment. So, we've been out there in the forefront, trying new things. We've always been about education," he added.

Eventually, Monson became determined to win back the new shooters he'd lost by appealing to their love of shooting or military-type video games. In a sense, it weaves a "tactical" kind of element back into the mix, but in a fun way.



A major goal of progressive retailers is expanding diversity in their customer base. With the majority of non-traditional shooters expressing an interest in joining the shooting sports, now is the time for your store to welcome them in and cultivate the future of recreational shooting.

By Greg Staunton

Photos: NSSF

"We're going to have a 'Call of Duty' night. We'll mock it up so it's fun, even letting shooters aim for the same levels the game has. We get those people here all the time. They shoot the (H&K) MP5 and say, 'Wow! This is just like Call of Duty.' And I say, 'No, that's the real thing.'"

Monson spent time deliberating over how to get these young "shooting" enthusiasts off their video games and into the real world.

"Shooting at the range is way more fun than video games, which people don't realize. We want to make it even more fun for those already shooting. We're going to push competition and just having a good time. Dealers aren't doing enough of this now. We're going to tell shooters to come to the range and have fun blowing up stuff," Monson said.

Millennials are likely to have discretionary income to spend on firearms and accessories. Those at the younger end of the spectrum (growing numbers of whom still live at home with their parents), use their own money for fun, while older Millennials earn enough to have substantial buying power.

Monson is not alone in seeing the need to market the fun, social or family elements of recreational shooting to grow the sport. A quick survey of other dealers and ranges around the country finds more of them promoting Family Nights, Ladies Nights, 3-Gun matches and fun-themed events such as Zombie Warrior competitions. They also draw in the larger community, raising funds for cancer research and other causes.

Bill's Gun Shop and Range offers a few competitive leagues for centerfire, rimfire and IDPA-style shooting. They partner with several area sporting clays ranges, exchanging clientele, as well.

Adjust And Keep Adjusting

Monson says a number of independent dealers who jumped on the bandwagon during the firearms boom with new shops and ranges are behind the marketing curve, still focusing heavily on self-defense and tactical training.

"This newer competition has all come in with the idea they're the best at training, and it's already kind of burned out. I have to create today's and tomorrow's concept to stay a step ahead of the competition," Monson said.



John Monson says his chain of five stores is changing its approach to attracting recreational shooters in 2016. Instead of pushing personal-defense, he's focusing on the "entertainment of shooting."

“We want everybody to come to our ranges, have fun and behave themselves. This is an opportunity to unite people.”

— John Monson, Owner, Bill's Gun Shop

Coming up with a concept or program is one thing. Advertising and sustaining it is another.

“We try to test the market with some different advertising to see what works best. Then I write a marketing program around it and get behind it 100 percent and splash the market. And when I feel the market is used up, I go and sample the market again. It changes constantly. You have to be careful not to jump in with both feet. Every dealer, regardless of size, has to ask himself what's working,” Monson advised.

Monson says he and his staff at all the Bill's Gun Shop and Range locations have to know how to communicate with different kinds of customers, and they utilize appropriate media outlets when advertising.

“I treat my Millennial customers differently than I treat my Baby Boomers. It's a different style of marketing. We have a diverse staff. We have a fantastic customer base of women. We've turned our Ladies Night into more of a Date Night. We advertise in *Engaged* magazine. It's a great market,” Monson said.

Monson advises dealers to “crawl out of their shells and market to everybody.”

“I market to groups that others don't. We want everybody to come to our ranges, have fun and behave themselves. This is an opportunity to unite people,” he added.

Bill's Gun Shop uses its website to publicize upcoming events and promotions, such as weekly Ladies Nights and a monthly giveaway, to encourage a wider range of customers to visit one of its five locations.



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Monson does his best to keep all his stores and ranges stocked with .22 ammo for their regular recreational shooting customers, while waiting for the industry to catch up the supply to the demand. But rather than sitting around waiting — and his schedule is quite demanding with his stores open seven days a week — he serves on several proactive committees and buying groups to provide manufacturers with critical feedback. They need to understand the impact of product placement, Monson says.

“This is just the education of the industry growing. I think it’s going to take a year or two to recover. We need to get the right people the right product at the right time. I have a bit more buying power because I have five stores, but it’s tough for the independent dealers,” Monson said.

Trends To Watch

Hunting remains a dedicated recreational shooting activity for more seasoned shooters, predominantly. According to the NSSF’s “Sport Shooting” report, hunters who also target-shoot make up 41 percent of the shooting population, while target-shooters who don’t hunt comprise 44 percent of shooters.

“The video game generation is probably not going to transition into hunting. Hunting lands are diminishing these days anyway. When I was a kid, we just went and knocked on a farmer’s door and got permission to hunt. Nowadays, you don’t see that,” Monson observed.

Handguns and traditional rifles are the preferred firearms on the range, and the choices are practically limitless. Modern Sporting Rifles (MSRs) have tapered off somewhat, though they have their own dedicated market. A decent part of the market is dedicated to sporting clays, trap or skeet. Interestingly, there’s a growing youth market for trap and skeet among high schools.



Research shows incentives such as discount coupons or a first-time shooter event will help drive participation at your store (see “Focus: Recreational Shooters” on pg. 32).

Minnesota’s High School Athletic Association says trap shooting will become the number one high school sport in the state by next year, overtaking football. This year, over 8,600 students participated on 243 trap and 25 skeet teams in state high schools.

“My son’s high school opened a trap league last year, and 40–50 kids came out for trap. It’s a small school, too. This is great for the shooting industry,” Monson said.

Monson sees no particular hot sellers in firearms or accessories for recreational shooting right now.

“The mainstays are good and steady, and the product is available. That’s the key. The manufacturers are doing a good job of this right now,” he added. **Q**

Dealers, what are your plans to promote recreational shooting at your store? We want to hear from you, send an email to editor@shootingindustry.com.

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FOCUS: RECREATIONAL SHOOTERS

RESEARCH ON INCREASING PARTICIPATION WITHIN NON-TRADITIONAL AUDIENCES

BY ROB SOUTHWICK
& CODY LARRIMORE



BETTER INFORMATION. BETTER DECISIONS.

Recent years have brought significant growth for the industry, though maintaining it may require extra effort. Past research shows the shooting sports skews toward older white males. However, the face of America is changing: Hispanic, African American and Asian American communities are expected to comprise the majority of the U.S. population by mid-century. Fortunately, this trend is not a threat to the shooting sports — instead, it may be a great source for growth.

To learn more about how to recruit new customers from non-traditional backgrounds, the NSSF examined Hispanics, African Americans, Asian Americans and Caucasians in 2015 through a series of focus groups and a national survey (conducted by Southwick Associates). Except for sharp differences across age groups, there's very little difference in these groups' collective interest in trying target shooting. Virtually zero percent of respondents said they had no interest. Among those who do not currently shoot, Hispanics and African Americans are much more likely (26% and 27%) than Asians (15%) and Caucasians (13%) to show very high levels of interest in trying target shooting. With little difference between the sexes on interest levels — and younger people under age 34 almost twice as likely as people over 50 wanting to try — the potential for growth is significant.

If these communities are interested, why don't we see them at the range more often? The major impediments reported by

non-shooters are they don't know where to shoot, they don't have the right equipment or they have no one to shoot with. Expense is the biggest hindrance among younger people, while women are more likely to cite having no one to shoot with. However, the real reason was likely found through the series of abovementioned focus groups. In these focus groups, a common theme was mentioned among Hispanics, Asian Americans and African Americans: The perception they wouldn't be welcome at a range, which would be full of stern white men who would likely resent intrusions by inexperienced people who don't look like them.

How To Counteract Misperceptions

The best promotional campaigns to overcome misperceptions will show anyone can shoot and all are welcome. One way to do this is through ads with images of first-time shooters from these communities. Ranges and their promotional campaigns should focus on the reasons why these new participants are interested in visiting:

- To have fun and experience excitement (58%)
- To improve my shooting skills (47%)
- To learn how to protect myself and my property (49%)
- To better understand firearms (43%)
- To learn a challenging sport (41%)

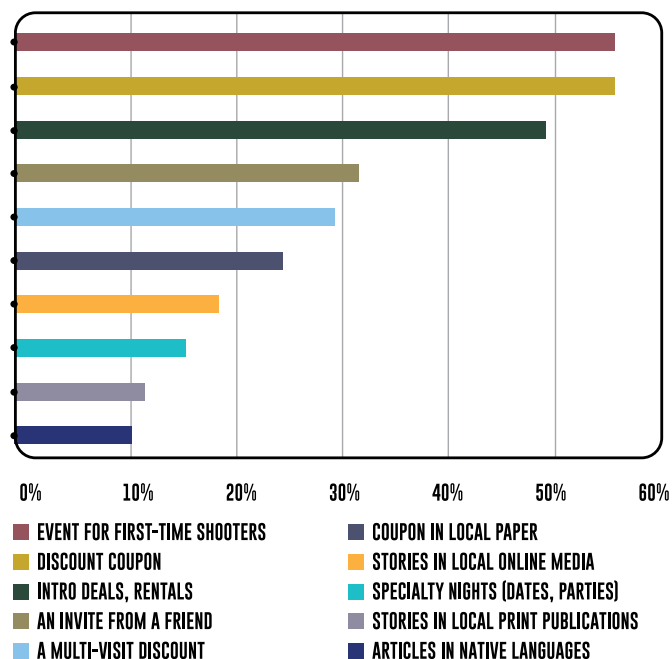
Electronic methods may be the most cost-effective means for reaching these growth communities. Google (73%) was the preferred method for locating a range, followed by friends or word-of-mouth (50%) and online reviews (37%), especially for younger customers. Women are somewhat more likely to use online reviews and friends than men.

Providing the right information is important if non-shooters are to make the decision to finally visit a range, such as on your store's website or social media page. Prices (80%), directions to the range (73%), types of shooting available (66%), services for beginners (64%) and operating hours (63%) are the top information items to share with new prospects. There were no significant differences between Hispanics, African Americans, Asian Americans and Caucasians in types of information preferred.

Incentives can work, too. Respondents say they would be most persuaded to visit a range by discount coupons (56%), a special beginner's event (55%) and a beginner's deal that included firearm rental, ammunition and safety equipment (48%). Young people are more likely than others to use almost any incentive except for a multi-visit discount. African Americans are more interested in special packages for beginners, Asian Americans are more interested in discount promotions online and Hispanics are more interested in events for first-time shooters, though the overall differences are slight for all of these incentives.

Traditional ways of presenting the shooting sports have generally failed in engaging America's growth communities. It's time we expand our promotional efforts to include new faces. To assist, the NSSF offers the full survey details at www.nssf.org/diversity. Other resources will continue to be added, as NSSF and Southwick Associates work to help the industry understand the interests, motivations, preferences and barriers associated with bringing non-traditional communities into the shooting sports. By working together, the shooting sports will continue to see significant growth well into 2016 and beyond. **①**

TYPES OF PROMOTIONS TO ENCOURAGE NEW CUSTOMER RANGE PARTICIPATION





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RECENT TRENDS DRIVE SALES IN LONG GUNS & ACCESSORIES

BY CAROLEE ANITA BOYLES

The long-gun market has undergone enormous changes over the past several years. The popularity of MSRs has meant a shift in calibers and changes in the accessories customers purchase.

Joseph Newton is one the gun managers at Bill Jackson's Gun Shop in Pinellas Park, Fla. He said sales of long guns for traditional hunting have slowed down in the past couple of years.

"I think it has a lot to do with the economy," Newton observed. "We used to have customers who bought a new hunting rifle every couple years. We're not in a 'hunting' county, so it's never been a real strong market with us — but it's been even slower since the economy slowed down."

Newton mentioned, however, sales of modern sporting rifles (MSRs) in the store have increased. "Any time there are concerns about restrictions on MSRs, sales increase," he said.

One change Newton sees in the marketplace is who's buying.

"More women are buying guns for self-defense, and are taking our classes," he said. Although this is most noticeable where handguns are concerned, Newton said, the number of women purchasing long guns for self-defense has increased as well, just not as much as it has for handguns. "We've also seen a small increase in the number of women buying MSRs," he added.

Some of the most popular guns in Bill Jackson's for self-defense are the Mossberg 500 series and the Remington 870. "In rifles, people are looking for Colt or Daniel Defense," he said.

Most customers are looking for a rifle in the \$1,000 to \$1,200 range, Newton said. "Then there's another group looking for something in the \$600 to \$700 range," he said.

Although he feels the economy is part of the reason why sales of traditional hunting guns have declined, Newton added the reasons are much broader than that.

"There's a lot of chatter on the Internet, not all of it necessarily accurate," he said. "We have a lot of customers come in who are worried about losing their gun rights. They're also concerned about their safety. I think this is why we're seeing more women coming in; they're single moms who have a home and family to take care of, and they're arming themselves."

To accommodate these customers, Bill Jackson's carries smaller-framed, home-defense shotguns with a youth-type stock.

"We think when someone finds a good quality gun to fit their hands and body, they'll tend to bond with that gun and shoot better with it," Newton said.



The Mossberg 500 pump shotgun platform received an update for 2016: the Mossberg 500 — ATI Scorpion. A TALO Group Distributor exclusive, this Mossberg and ATI collaboration features a six-position stock, the ATI Halo Heatshield, ATI Halo Side Saddle and accessory rail options.



Also new for 2016, the Expanse M4 from Colt is available at an entry-level price point for your customers that want an MSR-style rifle. It's available in 5.56x45 NATO with a 16.1-inch barrel and can be upgraded with the addition of a forward assist and dust cover.

SELF-DEFENSE LONG GUNS

At East Main Trading Company in Farmington, N.M., manager Chad Wright said long guns in a moderate price range are the ones that have been moving for them.

"The Savage Axis and the Ruger American are in the moderate price point, and a number of other manufacturers have been trying to get in on it too," he said.

Wright observed he's not seeing as many sales in bolt-action guns as he did in the past. "In hunting, I think people are borrowing a buddy's gun or their father's gun instead of purchasing a new gun," he said. "The people who are buying are purchasing either less expensive or very high-end firearms. Everything in between seems to be kind of slow."

Although Wright is seeing some sales in self-defense guns, this trend is not as strong as what Newton is experiencing in Florida.

"People with money aren't necessarily spending it on a gun for hunting," he said. "They're spending it more on a gun for self-defense. If someone is going to buy one gun this year, they're not going to buy a bolt-action hunting rifle; they'd rather have some kind of an MSR or a self-defense gun."

In rifles, Wright said, two of the favorite calibers are .223 and .308.

"As far as rifles go, those are still what people are buying, just because there's a lot of ammunition out there," he said. "We've also sold a lot of AKs."

In shotguns, the strongest sellers still are 12-gauge guns.

"Those sales are probably 50/50 between self-defense and sporting," Wright said. "Our sales have picked up for self-defense shotguns in the past year."

Wright said a mixture of politics and the economy are driving the changes in the marketplace for long guns.

"We're seeing increased sales today (one day after Obama announced his plans for executive action on gun control)," Wright said. "It's going to continue until after the election. I think many products will become hard to get again."

IF IT GOES ON AN MSR, IT SELLS

When it comes to accessories, Newton said, the strongest sales are in items for MSRs.

"As sales in these rifles increase, so do the sale of accessories for them," he said. "We have people coming in daily looking for optics, handguards, bipods and things like that."



"PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO SPEND MONEY ON ACCESSORIES FOR THEIR MSR THAN THEY ARE UPGRADING THEIR HUNTING SCOPE."

— CHAD WRIGHT, MANAGER, EAST MAIN TRADING COMPANY



"WHAT WE HEAR FROM OUR CUSTOMERS DRIVES WHAT WE CARRY IN OUR INVENTORY"

— JOSEPH NEWTON, MANAGER, BILL JACKSON'S GUN SHOP



(1) Manager Chad Wright says moderately priced long guns have been selling well at his store, especially those in .223 and .308. (2) For the first time, Okay Industries SureFeed MSR magazines are available commercially. The company co-developed 30-round M16 magazines with the U.S. military in 1973. (3) The V200, part of Viridian's Weapon-Mounted Long Range Illuminator Series, boasts a 300-yard range and provides a seven-position, manual focus lens. (4) The Trijicon MRO (Miniature Rifle Optic) is a sealed miniature reflex sight intended for use on long guns to provide fast target acquisition. (5) Luth-AR's MBA-3 Carbine stock allows shooters to have full adjustability with their rifles.

Wright sees the same thing at his store.

"People are more likely to spend money on accessories for their MSR than they are upgrading their hunting scope," he said. "We're selling lots of tactical red-dot sights, which people are putting on their MSRs."

If it will go on an MSR, it's popular, Wright said.

"Our sales of Magpul products have been increasing every year," he said. "They do anything and everything for an MSR."

In response to what customers are asking for, Newton said, the gun department at Bill Jackson's has changed over the past five years. Where it was weighted to hunting and target shooting a few years ago, now it's much more about handguns and tactical long guns now, including MSRs.

"We saw what the demand was, and we changed our

inventory," he said. "We're much more on the home-defense side of things now, and not as big into hunting as we were five years ago. We had camo and accessories for hunting back in 2012, but now the spaces where we had those things have been taken up with accessories for the modern sporting rifle."

Although this is not a change, Newton said, the staff at Bill Jackson's take great pride in listening to what customers are asking for and responding to their needs.

"We try to find out what their real concern is, and what they're looking for," he said. "Then we support them in that area; we ask a lot of questions and then try to address their concern. What we hear from our customers drives what we carry in our inventory."

According to Wright, East Main Trading Company has also adjusted its inventory to meet customer demand.

"Ten years ago we had maybe 15 MSRs to choose from," he said. "Now we have probably 80 in the store. In accessories, we're always adding new products. We have lots of different scopes from low-end quality optics for \$50 right up to scopes for \$1,500."

WHEN IT COMES TO ACCESSORIES
THE STRONGEST
SALES ARE IN ITEMS FOR MSRS

Newton noted customer service is the most important part of what Bill Jackson's does.

"We have a competitor down the road, and we get customers in here all the time who say they feel we're more approachable than our competition," he said. "They don't feel we're talking down to them. We realize someone who's coming in to buy their first gun doesn't understand a lot about guns, and we let them know we've all been there. We do our best to make them feel welcome. We want our customers to be comfortable when they're in an area that's new to them." **SI**

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New for this year, Traditions Performance Firearms introduces the Stock Pack into the company's accessory line. The Stock Pack was designed to help hunters and shooters carry important accessory items securely on their rifle; it fits most conventional butt-stocked muzzleloader and centerfire rifles.



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FINE-TUNING KNIFE SALES

BECOME A "GO-TO" STORE FOR CUTLERY CUSTOMERS

By Pat Covert

Chances are you're already selling knives and other cutlery-related items alongside your firearms, but are you maximizing your profits from them? Your firearms customers are likely knife aficionados as well, and vice versa — so why not take every advantage of this lucrative category? We asked some experienced voices in the cutlery industry to give *SI* readers insight on what they believe can help you get the most out of your cutlery sales.

We spoke with Spyderco Marketing Director Joyce Laituri, SOG Knives Marketing Director Chris Cashbaugh and ESEE Knives Cofounder Jeff Randall. These three professionals

represent a broad spectrum of the knife market covering everyday carry knives, tactical blades and outdoor cutters. They highlighted several ways for dealers to boost their profits in knife sales — and although they differed on what they'd prioritize, some very common themes developed.

"Tune-In" Your Staff

A knowledgeable sales staff is a major key to selling cutlery. Laituri suggests giving your staff hands-on experience with the knives they sell. "Encourage your sales staff to use the products they're selling. Offer your employees the opportunity to purchase knives at a discounted price or check out loaner knives to use at work, home and the outdoors. The more informed and familiar your salesperson becomes with the knives, the better experience and service they can provide for your customers."

Interacting with your customers is key, Randall notes.

"I highly recommend offering your customers a wide variety. There's nothing worse than walking into a store and only having one brand or style to choose from."

— Jeff Randall, ESEE Knives cofounder

"The dealers who do well are very interactive with their customer. Not just with the sale of the product, but teaching them how to use and maintain it. This means the dealer must understand the product well and be as much a user as they are a dealer," he said.

If a manufacturer provides insight on education, your store should take advantage of it. "We offer our dealers educational materials, printed catalogs and online information regarding knife materials, blade steels, grinds, locking mechanisms, design philosophy, steel element explanations and more," Laituri said.

Having an informed and engaged staff will translate into a better chance of a customer making a purchase, and a healthier bottom line for you.

Whenever possible, display your knife selection as openly and securely as you can to boost its visibility. Most cutlery manufacturers offer display aids, like the Spyderco 360-degree view locking display case shown here.



Keep It Fresh

In the cutlery world, variety is the slice of life. For your dedicated knife customers, buying is actually a form of entertainment — one they look forward to experiencing. Stocking fresh product is an important part of the equation.

“Add new items regularly,” SOG’s Cashbaugh lends. “We see increases in sales for dealers who rotate in new items periodically throughout the year. Retailers have regular customers who come into their stores, and by changing the selection of knives available they increase their chances of additional sales. Knives are a relatively easy impulse purchase and most knife owners own multiple knives, easily up into the double digits.”

Cashbaugh also advises retailers to maintain a broad spectrum of knives to cover their customers’ needs and budgets. “Vary your selection based on price and style. Knives are a very personal purchase, and also how buyers express themselves. They’re akin to watches in they’re a functional accessory to show off one’s style,” he noted.

Randall agrees, “I highly recommend offering your customers a wide variety. There’s nothing worse than walking into a store and only having one brand or style to choose from. Competition drives market forces. If the customer is limited to only one style or brand, force-fed the sale and finds out the product is not suited for their intended purpose, it will sour the customer on future purchases.”

Visibility Leads To Opportunities

Knives may be a secondary sale for you, but if your customers can’t see your merchandise, then the chance of a sale is drastically decreased.

“Product display and accessibility are crucial,” Laituri said. “Like all retail sales, selling knives is challenging in today’s retail environment where they need to be locked up for security purposes. Display your knife selection as openly as possible. Most cutlery manufacturers offer 360-degree view locking display cases. Add an attentive clerk with a key close at hand, and offer your potential knife buyer the ability to hold, evaluate, and breathe on the knives.”

“Allow your customers to be comfortable and confident in handling the knife, and understanding the features it has to offer,” Laituri continues. “Our experience shows offering a ‘test drive and handling session’ helps them find the right knife for their needs.”

For another option besides a case, you can display the knife on the counter cable-locked like you would a handgun. Most folders and fixed-blades have a lanyard hole at the base — perfect for threading in a cable.

Cashbaugh also recommends putting your knives out front and center and allowing customers to get a feel for their potential purchase. “Displaying and showing knives will help increase knife sales. If the customer can’t see or find knives in your store, they can’t buy them. Also, having a selection of knives available for customers to handle will help increase sales. Since knives are a very personal purchase, customers want to know if the one they’re purchasing will fit in their hand, be comfortable to use and easy to open, in the case of folders,” he said.

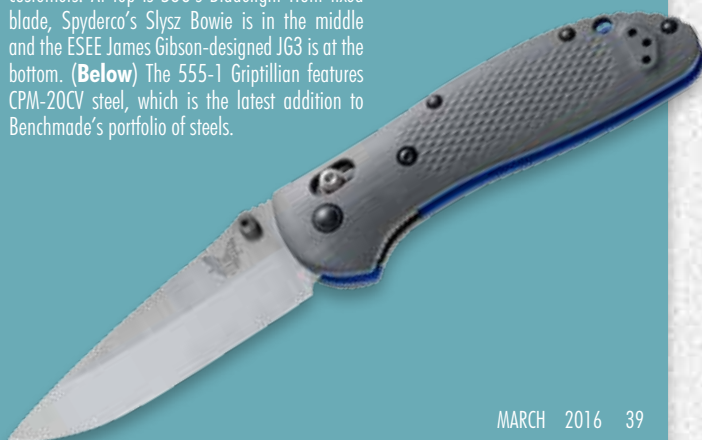
Though we’ve mentioned this tip before, it’s worth repeating: Place knives around firearms in your display cases. For instance, a tactical folder or fixed-blade knife should be around your self-defense and combat handguns. A hunting knife would be well suited around your long guns. This will help raise awareness of your inventory, and might just inspire a secondary sale.

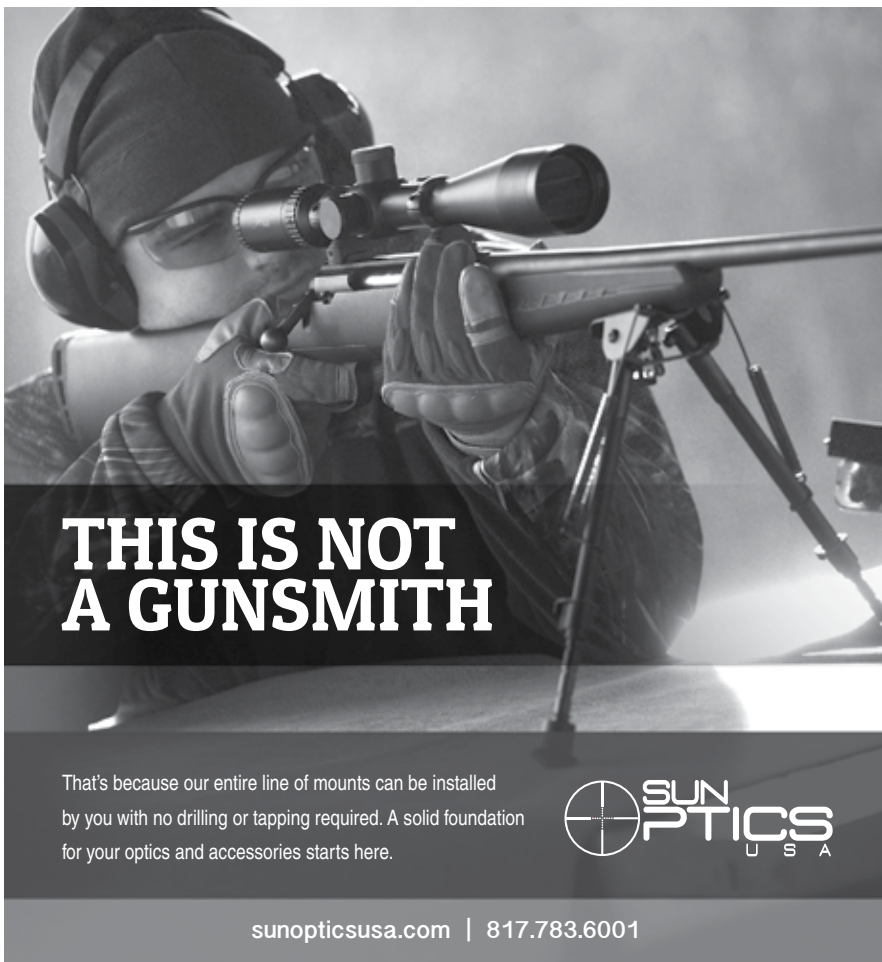


(Above) DMT’s DuoBase with MagnaBase Adapter, released last year, expanded the company’s bench stone accessory line to offer greater flexibility and convenience when sharpening knives and tools. (Below) Brought back by popular demand, the Buck Knives Selector 2.0 features three interchangeable blades: a drop point, partially serrated drop point and a gutting blade.



(Above) Variety is the slice of life for your cutlery customers. At top is SOG’s Bladelight Hunt fixed blade, Spyderco’s Slysz Bowie is in the middle and the ESEE James Gibson-designed JG3 is at the bottom. (Below) The 555-1 Griptilian features CPM-20CV steel, which is the latest addition to Benchmade’s portfolio of steels.





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Become A "Go-To" Store

Just because you're a firearms retailer, it doesn't mean your store can't become the "go-to" cutlery store in your area. It may not happen overnight, but showing you're serious about knives — by having a great selection and knowledgeable sales staff — will go a long way to building business.

"All good brick-and-mortar stores will tell you the reason they stay in business is due to earning trust with repeat customers," Randall advises. "Business should always be about a *real* mutual trust between the buyer and seller. Since brick-and-mortar stores have to price their merchandise higher than web-based stores just to cover operating expenses, making the transaction personal, informative and trustworthy is what makes the sale much more palatable to the buyer."

Just because you're a firearms retailer, it doesn't mean your store can't become the "go-to" cutlery store in your area.

All of the suggestions above can be done in-store with very little cost to you. Manufacturers typically offer countertop displays and signage (either free or drastically reduced) because they want to help you sell your knives. As for training your sales staff, keep in mind most are likely already knife users so putting one in their hands is a small price to pay for the opportunity to sell dozens down the road. ☺



The Gun & Knife Care Kit from Flitz will appeal to your knife customers who also have firearms. The kit comes with polish, cleaner, wax and a microfiber cloth.

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The **Desert Eagle Mark XIX L5** and **L6** are lighter versions of earlier Desert Eagle handguns. The lighter weight makes a noticeable difference in the handling of the pistols although two hands are still recommended for most shooters. The L5 in .357 Magnum (**pictured**) weighs 2 lbs. 9 oz., making it New York state compliant. Its overall length is 9.75 inches. The L6 in .50 AE meanwhile weighs 3 lbs. 7 oz., about 12 oz. lighter than similar Desert Eagle models. It has an overall length of 10.75 inches.



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Chiappa Firearms USA introduces the **LA 322 Kodiak Cub**, a take-down lever action .22 LR carbine. Made for harsh environments, the rifle has a matte chrome metal finish and black, soft-touch coating on the stock and forend to make it durable and weather resistant. Ideal for hunters and trappers or anyone who needs a portable, durable rimfire rifle, the LA322 Kodiak Cub's takedown design allows quick and easy separation of the buttstock from the action. This breaks the gun down into a 25-inch long package for convenient transport and storage. Other standard features are a hooded front sight and an elevation-adjustable rear leaf sight.



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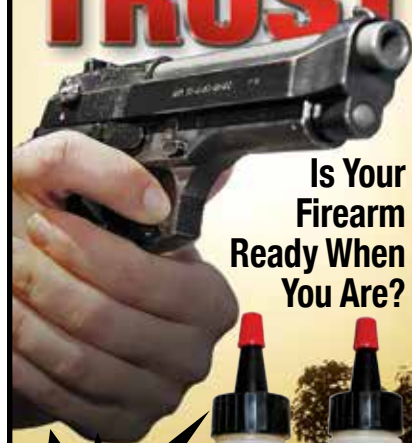
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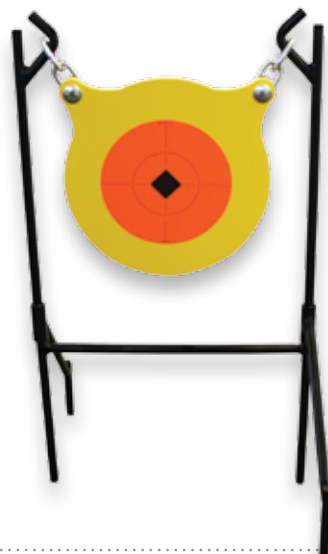
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We Are Shooting Ourselves In The Foot

By Russ Thurman

This past Sunday, my wife and I drove down a country road, enjoying the quiet beauty of winter's landscape — all sadly spoiled by an overabundance of garbage strewn along the road and into the tree line. Much of it can best be described as “target trash.”

It's amazing how many gun owners, both target shooters and hunters, wax eloquent about how much getting outside means to them, how it “connects” them to the great outdoors, yet many of them “trash” the very environment they claim to cherish.

There's a sad disconnect here, which goes beyond impacting where we live; it's also harmful to our industry. What gun owners — and by association, the industry — do speak much louder than what is said. Target trash and mountains of spent brass and shotshells shout: “I don't care!”

I know. That's not the message most of us send. Our challenge: To ensure those who are careless (or clueless) don't trash the outdoors — and our image as responsible gunowners and a respected industry.

Restoration For Recreation

Tread Lightly! is an organization that delivers a message we can support: “Tread Lightly! helps keep the great outdoors healthy, accessible and open for you.” That works for all of us, and industry companies are helping to deliver that message.

In February, Tread Lightly! announced one of its most ambitious Restoration for Recreation initiatives in its history. The organization awarded funding for 25 stewardship projects throughout the nation — thanks to funding from the Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative, Federal Premium Ammunition, Bushnell and the Dallas Safari Club.



Tread Lightly! PSAs deliver a potent message, one we should support.

The “25 for 25” — in celebration of Tread Lightly!'s 25th anniversary — includes projects in 18 states, which are expected to be completed by the end of summer. Off-highway trails, shooting ranges, campgrounds, hunting areas and other sites will benefit from the program.

“Thanks to our generous partners and the volunteers and organizers, we're making a real difference in the quality of recreation in this country — all before summer is over!” said Lori McCullough, Tread Lightly!'s executive director.

Salutes to the companies who are funding the “25 for 25” initiative, and those who support other Tread Lightly! programs. For descriptions of each project, visit treadlightly.org/projects.

Really? Seriously?

Tread Lightly! first caught our attention with the launch of its “Respected Access Is Open Access” campaign a few years ago. The PSAs are painfully “on target.”

Messages like “Ironical or Moronic,” “It's Like Shooting Ourselves In The Foot,” “Stop Target Trash,” “Really? Seriously?” and others are mixed with all-too-familiar scenes. They're a reality slap in the face. One, too often, deserved.

We become irate when property owners post no hunting, no trespassing signs. But who can blame them? We bemoan the lack of hunting areas or places to target shoot. And we wonder why.

Now is a good time for a self-check on our own actions, and a reality check of those around us. What's the message we're sending through our actions? Are we shooting ourselves in the foot?

You can help deliver the Tread Lightly! message: Their PSAs make excellent posters, flyers and website banners. Visit www.treadlightly.org to download the PSAs or to request a free CD with high-resolution versions.

Colt Sets Positive Future Course

“Upbeat” is often the way we describe the atmosphere at SHOT Show. That didn't do justice to the mood at the Colt booth at this year's SHOT Show. Yes, company reps were beaming about their 2016 new product offerings, but a major factor in all those smiles was the announcement just before SHOT that the company had emerged from Chapter 11.

“It is with profound appreciation to all of our key stakeholders that we share that we have completed the restructuring process and are emerging from Chapter 11 with a solid capital structure, significantly less debt and much greater financial flexibility,” said Dennis Veilleux, Colt Defense president, CEO.

The company, in the face of major financial challenges, entered Chapter 11 protection in June 2015. While the restructuring process was obviously painful at Colt, the company didn't show

it. Instead, the message coming out of Colt was one focused on the future: Planning for strong commercial sales growth, right-sizing product mix, refining distribution, enhancing dealer programs and creating a better customer experience.

All this was accomplished while Colt was undergoing restructuring in bankruptcy court. No small task, yet reflective of a strong positive attitude and commitment of those at Colt.

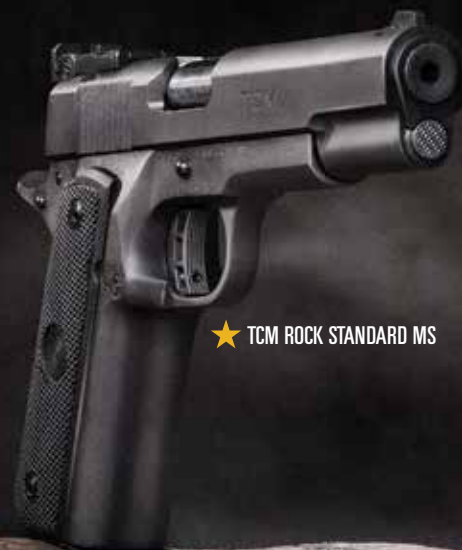
“We are grateful for their commitment to Colt and we look forward to the future as we build on our heritage as an iconic American brand with renewed vigor and purpose,” Veilleux said.

Salutes to Colt for staying the course and focusing on the future.

Visit www.colt.com



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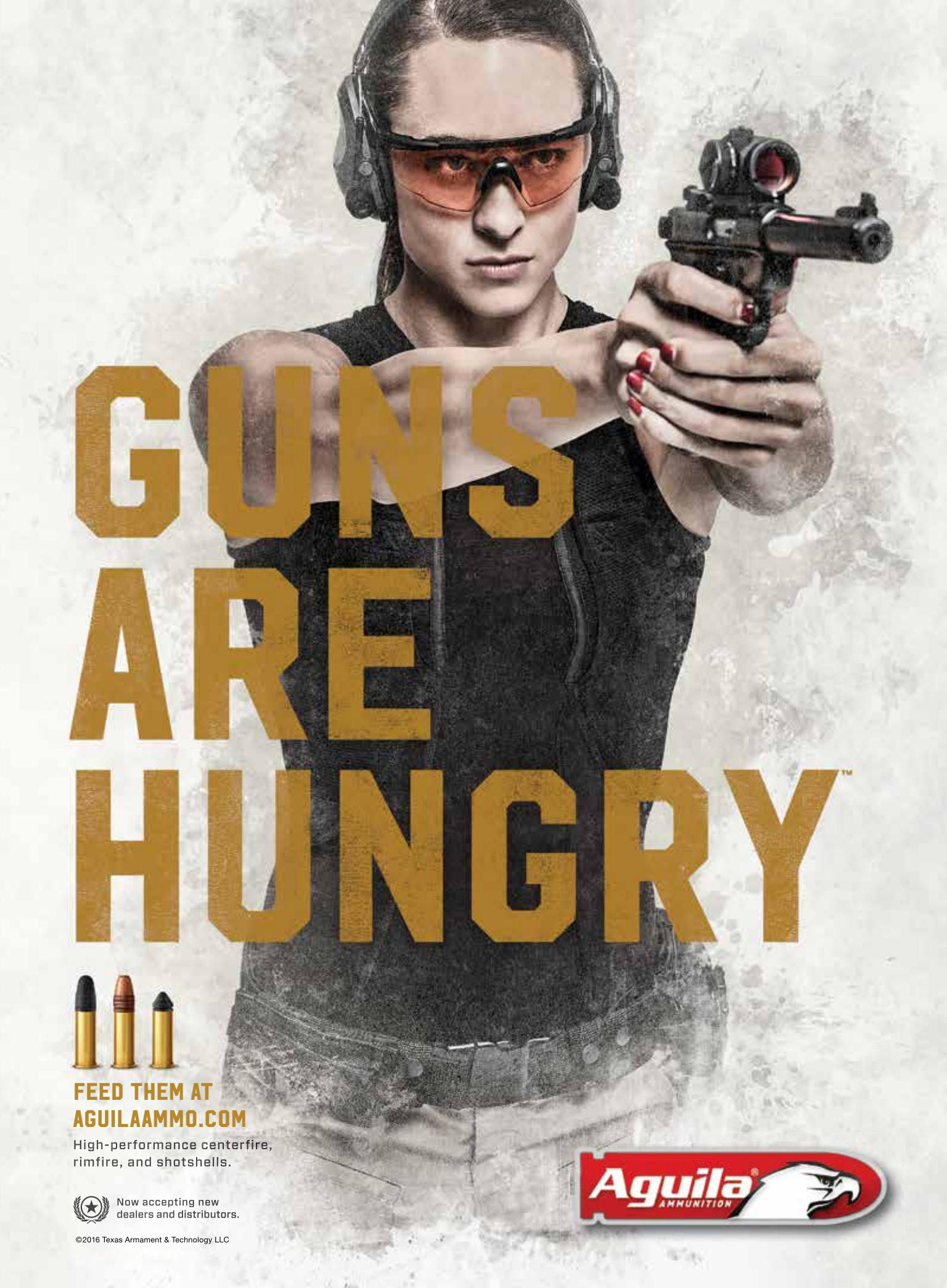
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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black tactical vest, orange-tinted safety glasses, and large black communication headphones, is holding a black handgun with a red dot sight. She is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is a light, textured surface with some splatters.

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